



Information Partners Can Use on:

## Changes in Qualifying for Extra Help in 2009

Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

Revised July 2008

Medicare and Social Security are determining whether some people who qualify for extra help will continue to qualify in 2009. People affected by these changes will get information in the mail from Medicare or Social Security.

### People who no longer automatically qualify for extra help in 2009

Medicare and Social Security are working together to mail notices on grey paper to people who will no longer automatically qualify for extra help in 2009 (CMS Publication No. 11198). The notice will explain why a person no longer automatically qualifies and encourage them to complete an enclosed application for extra help. They can return the application to Social Security in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. People will get these notices by the end of September.

People will no longer **automatically** qualify for extra help in 2009 because they no longer have one of the following:

- Both Medicare and Medicaid (full-benefit dual-eligible)
- A Medicare Savings Program (partial dual-eligible)
- Both Medicare and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Partners should encourage these people to **apply** for the extra help with Social Security or their State Medical Assistance (Medicaid) office. Applying early is important so their extra help can be effective as early as January 1, 2009, the date that automatic eligibility ends. You can help them complete an application online at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov), or you can help complete and mail the application they received in the mail.

If a person's situation changes and they again automatically qualify for extra help, Medicare will send them another notice on purple paper letting them know that they qualify.



## **People who continue to automatically qualify for extra help in 2009, but with a change in copayment level**

Medicare is also mailing notices (on orange paper) to people who will continue to automatically qualify for extra help in 2009 but whose copayment levels will change as of January 1, 2009 (CMS Publication No. 11199). Medicare will mail these notices by early October to let people know what their new copayment level is as of January 1, 2009.

The change in copayment level could result when a person with Medicare changes from one of the following categories to another:

- Institutionalized with Medicare and Medicaid
- Has Medicare and Medicaid
- Has Medicare and Medicaid and a change in income level
- Gets help from Medicaid paying Medicare Part B premiums (belongs to a Medicare Savings Program)
- Gets Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

For example, if a person with both Medicare and Medicaid no longer resides in a nursing home, they may no longer qualify for a \$0 copayment effective January 1, 2009.

**Note:** People with no changes who continue to automatically qualify for extra help as of January 1, 2009, won't get a notice from Medicare.

## **For more information about Medicare's notices**

People who have questions about Medicare prescription drug coverage, or people who think they received a notice in error should call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800 633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. They should let Medicare know they received a notice when they call.



## People who applied and qualified for extra help

Social Security is reviewing the eligibility of selected people who applied and qualified for extra help to make sure they are still eligible and getting the correct amount of extra help in 2009. Social Security will mail these people a letter at the end of August with an “Income and Resources Summary” sheet telling them what Social Security’s records show for their income, resources, and household size. A cost of living increase in a person’s Social Security payments won’t be considered a change in their situation.

People who get this letter must fill out the enclosed eligibility form called “Social Security Administration Review of Your Eligibility for Extra Help” (Form 1026-SM-REDE) and return the form within 30 days. **If they don’t return the form, their extra help may end.**

Social Security will review the eligibility review forms (1026-SM-REDE) and send letters explaining the decision. Social Security may decide any one of the following:

- There is **no change** in their extra help.
- There is **an increase** in the amount of their extra help.
- There is **a decrease** in the amount of their extra help.
- They no longer qualify for extra help.

Any change to the amount of extra help a person qualifies for could be effective as early as January 2009, unless their marital status or marital living arrangements changed. Changes in marital status or marital living arrangements may result in changes to the amount of extra help in the following month.

Anyone who believes Social Security’s decision is incorrect has the right to appeal it. The decision letter will explain the person’s appeal rights.

**Note:** People who don’t get Social Security’s eligibility review form (1026-SM-REDE) will continue to qualify for extra help in 2009. They won’t get a separate notice from Social Security.

## For more information about Social Security’s letter

- Visit Social Security at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).
- Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778. Callers should let Social Security know they received a letter when they call.



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